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ABSTRACT

Results of a qualitative study of the professional culture of nine primary schools that are implementing innovations are presented. Three aspects of schools' organizational culture are emphasized: (1) the principal as builder and carrier of the culture; (2) consensus on goals; and (3) professional relationships among teachers. Three cultural types were constructed from the study's data. These include the family school, the school as a professional organization, and the "living-apart-together school." In the family school, an informal culture of congeniality is evident. The principal acts as a grandfather figure; the goal is survival; and teacher relationships are personal because teachers who are willing to take initiatives are not hindered. In the school as a professional organization, the culture is one of proficiency and efficacy. The principal is seen as an architect; the school has a mission; and teachers interact like a professional football team. The culture of such schools is highly compatible with innovation, providing a catalyst to the innovation process. The "living-apart-together school" exhibits a culture of mediocrity. The principal is distant and uninvolved. There is no vision of the school's future. Teachers function separately as individuals, not as a team. The culture of this school offers innovation little chance of success. (RH)

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THE PROFESSIONAL CULTURE OF INNOVATING PRIMARY SCHOOLS
NINE CASE STUDIES

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SUMMARY

In this paper, the results of a qualitative study of the professional culture of nine innovating primary schools are presented. The culture is defined as a 'socially constructed reality'. Three relevant domains are identified in order to study the organizational culture, namely the principal as builder and carrier of the culture, the goal consensus and the professional relationships among the teachers. The culture-stories of the nine schools and the following comparative analysis resulted in a description of three culture-types, that are clarified by means of metaphors, namely the family-school, the school as a professional organization and the living-apart-together school. In the study, evidence is also found for the interaction between the culture and the implementation of an innovation. The nature of the organizational reaction that occurs when a school implements an innovation depends on the existing culture and is determining to a large degree the success or failure of the innovation.

1 INTRODUCTION

Both, in the daily efforts for school improvement as well as in the research studies about the internal functioning of schools, the attention for the school culture has come to the fore. In this paper, we present the results of a study about the professional culture of innovating primary schools. The culture of the school is defined as a socially constructed reality, that gives meaning to what otherwise would be meaningless behavior and that also produces norms that conduct the behavior. We joined the definition of Schein (1985, p.6) who sees the culture of an organization as : "The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion and organization's view of itself and its environment". The main aim of this study was to explore the way in which the professional culture of a school can be charted systematically and also to investigate the relationship between the culture and the way an innovation is implemented. These questions were studied from both, a quantitative and a qualitative point of view. In this paper, we only present the results of the qualitative part of the study. For the quantitative results we refer to other publications (Staessens e.a., 1989).

2 CONSTRUCTION OF THE INTERVIEW GUIDE AND DATA-COLLECTION

The study has been done in nine Flemish primary schools that are participating in a large scale improvement project, namely the R.P.S. (Renewed Primary School). For a description of the innovation, we refer to other publications (Vandenberghe & Depoortere, 1986). While selecting the schools, different criteria were taken into consideration, among which geographical location, the size of the school and the willingness to participate constructively in the study. We emphasize that the concern for generalizability of the research findings across all the Flemish primary schools, doesn't come in the first place. The sample of schools was selected in order to explain as good as possible the relationship between the culture and the way the innovation is implemented. So we did not look for generalizable statements or conclusions with reference to the actual occurence of certain culture types in the reality.

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The emphasis in the qualitative part of the research is rather on making intelligible the way in which the culture is constructed and functions.

In these nine schools, we interviewed the principal and at least half of the total number of teachers. These conversations took on the average 90 minutes and were registered on tape. These interviews were accompanied by a visit of a few days to each school. Each school was visited by two researchers.

In order to obtain comparable information across several teachers and schools, an interview guide was constructed around three culture domains. These domains were selected on the basis of an analysis of the literature and on several exploring conversations with people with practical experience. We call these domains 'privileged culture domains', because we consider them as core variables for the daily construction of a school culture. It concerns 'the principal as builder and carrier of the culture', 'the goal consensus' and 'the professional relationships among the teaching staff'. In the next sections, these three culture domains are justified and clarified. But first we will deal with an important assumption underlying the construction of the interview guide. We assume that we can only gain insight into the culture or those aspects that are obvious when the team members talk about the particular functioning of their school. The interview guide has to encourage people to talk about their school and their experiences with it. This assumption is related to the distinction of several levels in the professional culture, namely the level of the artefacts or visible appearances of the culture, the level of the basic values and the level of the basic assumptions (Schein 1985; Staessens & Vandenberghe, 1987, 344-345). The basic values and basic assumptions are not directly observable, but are expressed indirectly in the visible appearances of the culture. This pushed us to make a distinction in the interview guide between two kinds of questions, namely **'informative questions'** and **'exploratory questions'**. The former seek out factual, objective situations and events, such as : *'How often is there a staff meeting ?'* The 'exploratory questions' are not so much aimed at objective situations and events but more at experiences and the perception of the interviewees, for example : *'How would you describe what sort of school it is during a conversation with parents ?'* or *'Are there things you cannot talk about in this school ?'* In other words the questions seek out the meaning given by the interviewees to the various activities in the daily running of the school.

In the following, we clarify the three culture domains and we refer each time to the interview guide.

'The principal as builder and carrier of the school culture' constitutes the first culture domain. We start from the proposition that a principal, because of his position, has the opportunity to create the school culture or to modify the existing culture. By what a leader says or does he communicates what is important. In this way, certain expectations are communicated which are, on the one hand, related to the basic values and assumptions in the organization but which, on the other hand, may be influenced by the leader.

A principal, for instance, who asks regularly for the course of certain classroom practices or for possible

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problems, expresses that for him/her the classroom practice of the teachers and their pedagogic-didactical functioning is very important. But by doing this, the principal also communicates the expectation to be informed about the classroom practices. A principal, on the opposite, who contacts his teachers exclusively in relation to administrative and organizational matters, expresses this is his/her most important concern.

The stress is here on the meaning of the behavior and activities of the principal for the teachers and not so much on the behavior and activities on themselves. Extremely put, this means that the same behavior of two principals in two different situations can have a totally different meaning, or that the same behavior of one principal in two different situations can be perceived differently by the teachers, and as such may be given another meaning. In other words, also the reality of leadership is a socially constructed reality. By means of informative and exploratory questions in the interview guide, we try to discover how the principal personifies the organizational culture and how he communicates the culture. In other words, we want to find out how the leader functions as a "storage place" (Sergiovanni, 1986) of organizational values and norms.

By way of illustration, we give some interview questions :

- *Do you have many contacts with your principal ? What kind of contacts ?*
- *Can you tell me what is of great importance to your principal ?*
  How do you notice that ?
- *To which matters does your principal pay little or no attention ?*
- *What does your principal expect from you as a teacher ?*
- *What does your principal expect from you as a member of the team ?*
- *What is the importance of your principal in your school ?*

The **'goal consensus'** is the second culture domain. We start from the assumption that the culture is constructed and expressed eminently through what the team as a whole considers as very important. However, goal consensus is more than a rational aiming and a rational consensus, through which the functioning of the school is seen as the result of careful planning, specific choice of means and procedures, division of tasks and the introduction of evaluation and control activities. The rational model assumes that the development and implementation of explicit, measurable goals will have a positive impact on organizational effectiveness.

However, when we talk about 'goal consensus' in a cultural perspective, we mean the goal direction that functions as the mission of the school, the general description of the basic values of the organization. These goals mainly serve as a source of identification and motivation for the teachers in the school. They give meaning to their work and bind them to the organization. It concerns a task, an assignment, a mission a school is setting to itself. It is a kind of 'surplus', something in which the school wants to achieve more than what is legally prescribed. Hallinger & Murphy (1985) refute the requirement that goals must be specifically and clearly formulated with a view to the effectiveness of the organization. Successful or effective schools are characterized more by 'a clear mission' and not necessarily by specific measurable goals. In this perspective, 'vision' becomes a critical factor. The development of a vision is more than the development of a plan that has to be followed. "It can be compared with the indication of

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a way, a direction, connected with a motivation to follow that direction" (Van den Berg & Vandenberghe, 1988, p. 72).

We give some examples of questions through which we tried to discover the existence or the functioning of such a consensus or vision.

- *Can you say what the team considers as very important here in the school ?*
- *Why is this considered important ?*
- *How can I notice that this is important ?*
- *Does everyone in the school consider these matters as important, or is this only the case for a few teachers ?*
- *How would you characterize your school during a conversation with parents ?*
- *What exactly makes your school different from the other schools ?*
- *Do there exist stories, expressions or slogans which are typical for your school and which are used to express what is considered as very important ?*

'The professional relationships among the teaching staff' form the third focus to study the culture. We cannot speak about the culture of an organization if there is no group that carries the culture. The organizational culture only exists if the members share a number of common experiences and interactions. Culture is a socially constructed reality (Schein, 1985, p. 7). It is precisely through these interactions that the culture is formed. So, we consider the professional relationships among the teachers as an important carrier of the culture. Communication and cooperation between teachers are two basic processes in the construction and maintaining of the culture. It is through the process of communicating about professional matters that norms can grow which sustain (or not) innovation and improvement. At the same time, these interactions form an element of social control. Through communicating with and reacting to each other, one makes clear what is possible, on the one hand, and what is unthinkable, on the other hand. Consequently, certain behaviors are approved of and others are rejected. The problems related to the socialization in a (new) organization is an indirect indicator of the existance of an organizational culture. That proves that culture has to be 'learned'.

We give a few examples of interview questions in order to discover the values and norms which are constructed in the professional contacts between the teachers.

- *How often is there a staff meeting in your school ? What themes are discussed on these meetings ? Do you have common coffee pauzes in your school ? Do you talk about the work ?*
- *Does it happen that you have a look in a colleague's classroom ? How often does that happen ? What makes you do that ? Do you discuss about those moments afterwards ?*
- *When you think back to all the contacts with colleagues you just described, can you say which contacts are most precious to you ? Why ?*
- *Are there things here in school which are unable to be talked about ?*
- *Does it happen that there are conflicts between the team members ? What is at stake then ?*

In summary : a school culture is not an abstract phenomenon, but a result of a social process going on daily in an organization. We constructed a conceptual framework in which three core variables were distinguished which clearly reflect the basic definition of culture, namely it is a socially constructed reality. Around these three core variables, interview questions were constructed.

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3 DATA PROCESSING

3.1 The within-site analysis

In a first stage of the analysis, the depth analysis or the within-site analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 79 ff.), each school was regarded as an entity, the intention being to understand and describe each school as a case in itself. The immediate registration of the data occured by tape-recording the interviews. Different transformations were carried out on the protocols. A first transformation consisted in coding the interviews by means of a self-constructed coding scheme that was constructed around the three core variables. In a second transformation, the interview fragments of the different teachers of the same school, corresponding with a same code-combination, were retrieved by a computer program (FYI 3000-plus). In this stage, the data were transformed from a classification per teacher to a classification per code combination for the different teachers of one school. So, the data were rearranged for the qualitative analysis per school. In a third transformation, the data under one code-combination and across all the code-combinations, were brought together and resulted in a written 'culture story' per school with which - by way of concrete statements by teachers and the description of real activities and events - a picture of the everyday running of the school could be given. At the same time first reflections were built-in about the norms and values which could be deduced from that picture. In this third transformation, we can distinguish several steps. In a first step, the classified material per school and per culture indicator was read two times in order to get a global picture. Striking things were noted down in a tentative way. So, the researcher had a condensed mental image of each school in mind. In a second step, the classified material per school and per culture indicator was read through for another two times with the intention to deduce relevant themes for each culture domain, that reflect the specificity of each school. By means of this transformation we come from information obtained by individual teachers to statements on the level of the school. Miles & Huberman talk about detecting 'themes' (1984, p. 216) that can be considered as a kind of "Gestalts which pull together a lot of separate pieces of data". Goetz & Lecompte (1984, p. 192) talk about 'emerging patterns'. They compare it with the process of discovering patterns when assembling a jig saw puzzle. An example of a similar theme or pattern for the variable of 'the principal as builder and bearer of the culture' is that the principal creates structures to facilitate team work among teachers. This is a kind of 'Gestalt' or significant summary based on different observations and statements. In a third step, the classified material was read through for another two times with the intention to further analytically describe the distinguished themes. In other words, we went from a global theme to an analytic image. The themes found in this step were described in terms of concrete activities and events. Implications concerning the example mentioned above, namely that the principal provides structural possibilities to facilitate teamwork among teachers, are a.o. that the principal builds in time for consultation between colleagues in the schedule, that he demands a written report of these moments in a consultation-book, and that he regularly informs about the cooperation between colleagues.

A next step consists of a systematic testing of the conclusions. In the testing-process we question the

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validity of the interpretation-process. In this process a few principles played a part, although we can hardly speak of generalizable principles. This implies that not every principle applies to all data. For some data the frequency something was mentioned, was taken into account. Regularly, data were triangulated. For that purpose, for example, data collected via the interviews were placed systematically against written contextual data obtained as a result of the visit. Also the provisional interpretations were triangulated by presenting them to the second researcher who visited the school in question. In this way, certain interpretations were confirmed, and others were adjusted or refined.

A final transformation consisted in writing down the data in a 'school-image' in which - on the basis of concrete activities and events of the daily running of the school - a sketch of the culture and of the way in which is worked on innovations, is given. We are not going into the results of this analysis here (see a.o. Staessens 1989; Staessens, 1990, p. 223-285; Staessens & Vandenberghe, 1990).

3.2 The cross-site analysis

In the 'cross-site analysis' (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 151 ff.) the nine schools were studied from a comparative point of view. Central was the description and exploration of similarities and differences between schools. Miles & Huberman (1984, p. 121-122) stress the appropriateness of metaphors to describe complex social realities. A metaphor is a figurative expression. The language of metaphors is more a figurative and a connotative than a denotative language. As such, metaphors allow to draw a rich and complete image of a complex reality. Moreover, the use of metaphors corresponds with our assumption that organizations cannot be mapped in a completely rational manner, but that they are more appropriately characterized by complexity and circularity. In order to arrive at metaphors that describe the culture of a school, we distinguished a number of steps. The first step can be formulated in Morgan's words (Morgan, 1986, p. 322) as "diagnostic reading", by which is tried "to discern the character of the situation". Each school-image resulting from a vertical analysis, was twice completely read through. For each variable was systematically noted in which aspects the school-images resembled each other, and which aspects differed. In a next step, on the basis of these similarities and differences between the schools, groups were made per variable. Next we tried to identify, by way of a metaphor, those crucial aspects distinguishing one group from another. Thus, the metaphor is a description of those crucial aspects.

A following step is the "critical evaluation" (Morgan, 1986, p. 322). This means a critical evaluation was made "of the significance thus produced". In fact, after the description of each variable, by way of a metaphor, the school-image of each school was read once more and was tested in order to make sure that the choice of the metaphor for the schools in question was right and meaningful. Stress was put on clarifying patterns or mechanisms. For the variable 'the principal as builder and carrier of the culture', for example, it was our intention to indicate, by way of describing the different patterns, how (at least for the nine investigated schools) a principal shapes and/or carries the culture in his/her school. In the nine schools three variants came to the fore. We will describe them as the grandfather-principal, the

architect-principal and the nonentity-principal. In the descriptions of these variants, the focus should be on the way a certain type of principal creates values and norms, and how this influences the functioning of teachers and the staff. Here, the emphasis is on the dynamic character of the professional culture.
This cross-site analysis resulted in the description of three general culture-types, described in what follows, namely the 'family'-school, the school as a 'professional organization', and the 'living-apart-together'-school (1). Fragments between "..." and printed in italics are literally quotations by interviewees.

4 THREE CULTURE TYPES

4.1 The family-school

The **principal** in the family-school can be characterized as a **grandfather-figure** (2). This principal emphasizes the informal contacts with his teachers. He consciously creates the space to talk with them in a pleasant and homey atmosphere. Spontaneous contacts are considered as more important and more valuable than structures. As a consequence, formal consultations are reduced to a minimum. This principal communicates permanently with his teachers: *"If you have problems, you can call on me."* Although it can concern professional matters, the emphasis is predominantly on personal concerns. The principal goes immediately into the feelings, questions and problems of the teachers. The teachers say: *"Our principal is always at our disposal."* Words that are heard many times when the teachers typify their principal are: *"understand"*, *"support"*, *"defend"*. The teachers feel personally addressed by their principal. We quote one of the grandfather-principals: *"One should not be a controller... I believe more, how should I say it, in a father-figure. Someone who says something like: You can always come to talk with me, even if you have problems at home."* So, the principal functions in the first place as a friend or a father-figure. The grandfather-principal considers himself as a good principal if the teachers think of him *"as one of their own"*, and if the teachers *"feel at ease"* in interpersonal contacts. The teachers say: *"We don't really see him as a real principal. We are all colleagues. He is a member of our team."* As a consequence, this principal rarely comes to the front. He doesn't act as a leader, but as an equal.
There exists a relationship between the way in which the grandfather-principal builds a culture of geniality and friendliness on the one hand, and the way he perceives the teachers on the other hand. He views the teachers in the first place as 'friends' and he has a strong confidence in the individual teacher. He thinks that the personality of each teacher and their own teaching behavior have to be respected, and that it is the duty of the principal to stand by his teachers through tick and thin. When taking a decision, this principal always takes into consideration the point of view of the teachers: *"I've been a teacher myself for such a long period."* By this legitimation, a mechanism is started by which the grandfather-principal disallows himself the right to control the teachers.
This type of principal intervenes seldom on the pedagogic-didactical domain. He considers the teachers as their own master concerning classroom matters. He offers the following legitimation: *"The teachers know better what is good for their classroom than I do."* This principal does not see himself as competent

on the pedagogic-didactical domain and he does not express any specific expectations concerning the organization of classroom activities. He thinks that he does not have the right to do that because of his ideal to be an equal and not a superior. However, the many informal talks have as a result that he is well acquainted with the classroom practice of the teachers. Although he does not express any expectations, he wonders frequently if he does not expect too much of his teachers. He does not want to overload the teachers.

In what he is saying and doing, the grandfather-principal stresses constantly the value of the team spirit. According to him, this is at least as important as teaching contents, pupils' results. This is proved by a quotation of a teacher: *"Our principal says: If the atmosphere in the team is not good, you cannot work. This is more awful than when you have a problem in your classroom."* A good atmosphere in the group is considered as a basic condition for the whole school functioning. According to the grandfather-principal, it is his duty to stimulate the team spirit and to act as a catalyst of the atmosphere in the group. He puts a lot of energy in guarding the team spirit and in avoiding conflicts. He is also afraid to hurt people. As a consequence, he tries to avoid situations in which he has to take action. He seldom intervenes directly and he is slow to anger. His basic assumption is that *"a good atmosphere permits one to live and work better."* Hence, he stresses the value of common celebrations, of contacts during coffee breaks and lunch time and of personal contacts outside the school. These are the channels he can dispose of to hold the group together.

The teachers, the pupils, the parents as well as the local community experience him as a favorite person in consideration of the growing and blossoming of the school. He is present at all kinds of festivities and he is engaged in the community life. He expects his teachers to do the same. The grandfather-principals are persons who like talking to people. They are described by the teachers as *"good figures for the public relations"* and are typified as *"entertainers"*, *"specialists in social life"*. The central point in their activities is not located in the pedagogic-didactical domain, but more in the social and organizational area.

The **goal-consensus** in the family-school can be characterized as **'a struggle to survive'**. In these schools, we receive typical answers on the question what the team considers important for the school. The teachers answer immediately. They do not need any reflection time. Moreover, the answers display a strong consensus. The same words are used frequently. This indicates that there exists indeed a goal-direction. However, it is striking that one is directed towards one specific topic, namely the number of pupils and the possible expansion of the school. It concerns a functional concern out of a survival reflex. If the school wants to survive, this has to be considered as important.

It concerns relatively small rural schools that are in competition with *"famous urban schools"*. Many parents of the village always sent their children to these urban schools in the past. This resulted in a dark future perspective for the rural schools. In both schools, one has raised the alarm and tried to deal actively with the situation. In one school one has spread the following slogan: *"Even small trees can bear good fruit."* The norm to judge the efforts is: not to loose pupils.

In this case, we can neither speak of a goal-direction that penetrates into the roots of the school-functioning nor of a vision on the pedagogic-didactical functioning of the school. The stress is rather on the number of pupils and the relationship between the school and the external world than on educational improvement and on the internal functioning of the school. This variant of the goal-consensus brings about that many efforts are meant to make the school as visible as possible to the external world. The contacts with parents are well cared for. A lot of energy is put into publicity and extra-facilities, such as the transport of pupils. The teachers are strongly engaged in the local socio-cultural life. We can compare this with a logic of giving and taking: *"If we want the parents to send their children to our school, then we....."* They are convinced that this 'surplus' guarantees the future of the school: *"That openness to the outside world is what makes our school different from the others. Only excellent education wouldn't be sufficient. We are holy convinced of that."* Consequently the meaning of outsiders is an important criterium for the policy of the school. These schools express a kind of geniality, cosiness and love for children. Within the group of teachers, there exists a strong willingness to invest in the school. Possible loss of children is a matter around which the whole team can be mobilized. One even handles a kind of struggle terminology, namely that one is prepared *"to fight for it"*.

The **team** in the family-school can be characterized as **'a village fanfare'**. The stress is on the informal contacts between the team members. Not many structures are developed and there exists a strong confidence in the spontaneous development of most matters. A frequently heard remark is: *"We don't need to have meetings for the sake of meetings. In fact, we don't need many meetings because a lot of things are said in between here."* The teachers are not used to talk about their classroom work or subject matters. They do not visit each other's classrooms. They talk quite a lot about their pupils in an anecdotal way. In other words, the communication and cooperation among the team members does not relate that much to pedagogic-didactical aspects. When there is, nevertheless cooperation, it is based on individual initiatives. As a consequence of the frequent informal contacts, the teachers are well acquainted with each other's work. Although the stress is on their individual work in their classroom, they do not feel isolated.

The contacts between the teachers are more personal than professional. As it is the case in a village fanfare, 'to be together' functions as a reward on itself. The social and emotional support is considered as much more important than the construction of a structural network for professional support. It is striking that the teachers stress the fact that they have many personal friends among their colleagues. They want to make these contacts pleasant and congenial. To care-for, commitment and loyalty are considered very important. The teachers' room is an important place in these schools. They attach great importance to celebrations (birthdays or leavings). The teachers are also used to meet each other outside the school. In these schools, there are rarely conflicts or tensions. If there are tensions, nevertheless, they are not exploited. One tries to avoid tensions that lead to big conflicts. The work climate in these schools is experienced as extremely positive. All the teachers like the work in the school and think it is a

privilege that they "*may*" work in such a school.

In conclusion, we may say that the culture in the family school is an **informal culture** of congeniality, with an aversion to official and structural matters. The basic assumption is: 'We are a great group with good intentions. We can trust on the spontaneous development of the matters'.

4.2 The school as a professional organization

The teachers characterize the **principal as an architect**. He is a well-read man and is well-informed about the recent developments in the different domains, and often talks about these with his staff. With their professional problems, teachers can always call on the principal. He makes sure an answer is found or help is offered. As such, the norm is created that the school is a place where teachers can learn something, and that one can become a better teacher by bringing up something in a professional manner. Isolate oneself in one's classroom is not accepted. The proposition that everything can always be improved, seems to be the principle of this principal.

The architect-principal takes clear decisions and communicates these as well to the teachers. Unlike the grandfather-principal, this principal dares to come to the fore and to put forward his/her own meaning. According to this principal certain aspects cannot be discussed or given into. He/she prefers possible tensions or conflicts above giving into his/her point of view and principles. As such, space and freedom are granted, but only within certain boundaries. All this has implications for the kind of contacts between principal and teaching staff. Above all teachers are treated as professionals. To a large extent they are given autonomy in their clasrooms. Yet, according to this principal the definition of being-a-teacher includes as well the fact that teachers are part of a team and that this team has an additional value, because it offers opportunities to learn. The principle is : "*To invest in the team and in cooperation with colleagues implies that one improves professionally*". The principal structurally enables professional exchange between teachers in creating facilities for consultation. Permanent dialogue is considered a condition for the creation of a we-feeling and a collective responsibility. Teachers are evaluated by this principal in terms of their professional development. He introduces the norm that being-a-teacher implies "*to develop continuously*". This is comparable to the idea that everything can always be improved.

The architect-principal is characterized by his enthusiasm, his enormous energy and his strong identification with the school : "*He is the first to be at school, and the last to leave*"; "*He would have his bed installed here*"; "*The school is his hobby*". Consequently, this same dedication is expected from the teachers. As such, the principal creates the norm : "*One should work hard.*" Extra efforts after the school-hours are expected from the staff : "*Our principal claims :'We have a two-month holiday to compensate evening-work.'*"

In comparison with the grandfather-principal it is striking that this principal speaks little of his administrative and organizational tasks, unless to state he/she would rather spend more time on the

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pedagogic-didactical aspects. According to the teachers, this principal manages to have administration and organization go smoothly and efficiently without this taking too much of his time and energy.
The architect-principal acts independently with regard to external agencies, like support systems, inspectors or the local community. External agencies are approached in function of the priorities of the school.
The architect-principal puts himself forward as a leader of a professional organization. He has a clear vision on the future of the school and manages to communicate his passion to the teachers.

The **goal-consensus** of the school as a professional organization can be characterized as a **'mission'**. Teacher's use of identical formulations to indicate what they consider important for the school, leads us to conclude that it is self-evident to speak and think in terms of the basic-philosophy or the fundamental principles of the school. It concerns also an active goal-orientation. This means that one talks about it, that one is constantly occupied with it and that one formulates proposals. In other words, one describes the school as having an assigment, a mission, and is used to think in terms of : *"Who are we ?"; "What is the image of our school ?"; "What do we want ?"* Moreover, it is not only an active but also a collective goal-orientation. The accordance between the teachers is very strong. This, however, does not imply that conflicts or tensions are impossible. Yet, it is a characteristic that these conflicts are not experienced as negative as such, but rather promote interactions and discussions. Typical of these schools is that tensions are surpassed in view of what one thinks important for the school and what one ultimately strives for : *"The most remarkable thing is that when we have to do something or if we have to work on something, we put everything aside. We, then are one team."*
The contents of the goal-orientation can differ. In one school, for example, the school identity has been built around the principles of the innovation one is working on. In the team the innovation has brought about a reflection and functions as the basic-philosophy of the school. In another school the goal-orientation is built around the following slogan : *"The school needs to have an emanation to the outside based on internal quality."* (see, Vandenberghe & Staessens, 1991)
In spite of differences concerning content, the goal-orientation in the schools belonging to this type displays evidence of a number of common traits. Firstly, the basic-philosophy is all-pervading. It involves an encompassing project, a leitmotiv through the schoolfunctioning, that relates both to the school as a whole as well as to the classroom practice of the individual teachers. It involves, here, not so much a functional, but a professional basic philosophy. The goal-orientation controls the actual school-life up to the smallest details, but implies as well a vision about the future of the school.
A second common characteristic is that diverse channels exist through which goal-consensus is made present. This can, for example, be the figure of the principal, the school's plan of activities, available documents and brochures, emblems, slogans. On the one hand, these channels are the storage-places of the goal-orientation. On the other hand, they continuously function as memory, challenge and questioning, and as such activate a mechanism of continual reflection. The questions : *"Why are we doing*

this so ?" and *"Can we do this differently ?"* are permantly present. Critical thinking in consideration of improvement has become self-evident. Teachers, thus, have to jusitify why they do something and how this fits into the basic philosophy of the school. The teachers also dispose of a ready knowledge of the goal-consensus. In other words, the basic philosophy is not limited to something written down in documents. It is a living orientation. The dynamic character is, moreover, stressed. It does not involve a static fact that remains once and for all unchanged, but a dynamic orientation that is confirmed, questioned or modified by the events of the daily school-life. The teachers can easily formulate in which concrete activities the goal-orientation takes shape. One experiences that the own classroom practice and the daily activities are part of a larger unit. Nevertheless, the importance of the quality and the personality of the individual teachers is stressed. Every individual teacher has internalized the goal-orientation of the school.

The committment to the goal-consensus of the teachers is a final common characteristic. They accept the expectation to invest a lot of time and energy in the schoolwork. Teachers enjoy their work. It is an evidence : *"We devote our heart and soul to our work"*. It is taken for granted that by working hard together on something a lot can be achieved. This common dedication creates, as well, a we-feeling and a feeling of unity. The teachers strongly identify with the school. They feel connected with the school's quality. They are proud of working in such a school. This motivates them to strive for better.

The **team** in the school as a professional organization can be characterized as **'a professional football-team'**. The formal character of the contacts between the teachers is emphasized. The members of the team consider themselves as colleagues and not so much as friends. Numerous structurally built-in discussion and cooperation moments (see staff meetings, systematic discussion with the colleague of the same grade, steering-committee, various working-groups) function as a supporting network. They are experienced as meaningful and necessary with respect to the classroom activities and the professional development of the teachers. Each meeting is well-prepared for and directed.

Clear and uniform discussions, communicated to everyone, are strived for. One makes sure that the work delegated to different working-groups or individuals is made visible to everyone. As such, the staff-meeting functions as a channel of communication where work of several individuals or groups is communicated and coordinated. In this way, one has an overview of what is going on in the school.

In these schools regular exchange of experiences and cooperation is customary. Work-related matters are discussed within the team. Moreover, room to bring forward such matters is available. The assumption is : *"Together we can do more than alone"*. As such, a network of internal support has grown and the professional functioning of colleagues is made visible. Knowledge, skills and means are made common property. The norm is : *"What each one of us does, should benefit all of us."* This results in a strong team-consciousness. The teachers consider the capacity to work in team as a surplus-value. The team is more than the sum of the individuals. It is something one belongs to. The team emanates dynamism and enthusiasm. Not withstanding this strong team-consciousness, the importance of the

individual teacher is stressed. In these schools, like in a professional football-team, the individual capacity of the teachers and the possibilities of the team are united. The principal is an important figure in introducing these norms.

Another characteristic of the team is the seriousness in taking up 'being a teacher'. The teachers are intrinsically motivated and it belongs to their professional self-definition that one can learn continuously. They have a dynamic professional self-image in which continuous reflection, and to some teachers continuous study, plays an important role. The team is, as well, characterized by a strong problem-solving attitude. The principle is that problems are there to be solved.

In this team tensions can occur. On the one hand, conflicts are not avoided and sometimes one dares to speak strong language, but, on the other hand, one makes sure that conflicts do not control the school-functioning. Also here the work climate is generally evaluated positively. Still, we are not talking about a team in which teachers are, in the first place, friends or in which it is customary to have regular contacts outside school. In the first place, one comes to school to work, to practice one's profession.

By way of conclusion we might say that a culture of **proficiency and efficacy** is present in the school as a professional institute. The basic assumption is : *"We have to fulfill an important professional task"*.

4.3 The living-apart-together school

The **principal** in this type of school can be characterized as a **nonentity-principal**. He lives at the edge of the daily schoolfunctioning and has little contact with the teachers. This is related to the fact that the principal is not very often present at school or functions in a very invisible way. About this principal teachers say : *"Whether the principal is present or not, it really doesn't matter much"*. The teachers do not know what the task of the principal consists of : *"He sits in his office. We don't know what he's doing there"*. In general, the accessibility and visibility of this principal is scart. The same is true with respect to the parents and the local community. And if contacts take place between the principal and the teachers, they are mostly problematic. In some schools the relationship between the principal and the teaching-staff is discordant, but due to the fact that nothing can be expected from the principal, the contacts are kept rather superficial. As such, open conflicts can be avoided.

In general these teachers speak rather negatively about their principal. It is striking that one starts to fantasize about a kind of ideal principal in terms of :*"A principal should be ..."; "Usually it is the task of a principal to ..."*.

This nonentity-principal lives distantiated from the classroom practice of the teachers. He hardly ever visits the classrooms, and he is ill-informed about what goes on in the classrooms. The teachers describe their principal by referring to his lack of pedagogic-didactical competence. These teachers experience the principal as the one who is absent when needed. They experience little support and little appreciation. It is obvious that with this principal one cannot talk about professional matters. The teachers say : *"Whenever we have problems, it is better to try to solve them among ourselves."* The rule

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communicated by the principal is : *"If you leave me alone; then I'll leave you alone as well."* This principal thinks it is important that everything goes smoothly and that there are no problems. Problems are experienced as disturbances.

The nonentity-principal communicates unclear and vague expectations to his staff. They feel he lets the school function from day to day without a clear vision. They talk about the lack of a *"leitmotiv"*. The nonentity-principal is easily influencable by externals. One reaction from parents, for example, can be sufficient to alter arrangements. Lots of matters are introduced, but, eventually, are not carried out. One teacher says : *"And what he sets as an objective on a staff-meeting, one day, does not come to the fore again within two, three years."*

Neither does the principal function as an uniting and motivating force for the team. Consequently, the teachers withdraw in their classrooms. To one group of teachers this stimulates self-satisfaction. They adopt the principal's law : *"Leave me alone; I'll leave you alone as well."* Another group of teachers asks for more support and a clear-cut framework.

The nonentity-principal withdraws and focusses on the administrative aspect of his task. This is considered an overreaction due to the lack of pedagogic-didactical competence. For indeed, the teachers are as well negative about the organizational capacities of this principal. Out of several negative experiences, the teacher's norm came about : *"Do not leave the principal to do anything."*

Typically of this principal is that the decision-process or the problemsolving-process goes wrong. Or the principal compromises endlessly in order to satisfy everybody as much as possible, or he takes decisions in an authoritative manner without participation of the teachers. This makes teachers look for mechanisms to avoid these decisions.

Also the principal's involvement in, and solidarity with the school is problematic. As a consequence of the negative experience with the actual principal the teachers stress the contrast with the previous principals. This functions as a mechanism to idealize previous principals.

The **goal-consensus** of the living-apart-together-school can be characterized as **'a ship without compass'**. These schools are characterized by a lack of vision about the future of the school. The answers to the question what as a team is thought important for the school, can be divided in two kinds. Firstly, there are these teachers who do not understand the question. They claim it a very difficult question. Some answer with a long silence, others hesitatingly ask the question to be repeated. If answers concerning content are given at all, they are very diverse and are concerned with universally accepted evidences, like *"that the curriculum is given"*, *"that the children learn something"*, *"that there is order and discipline"*. It is striking that most of the teachers speak in the I-form. They do not succeed, ever after the insistence of the interviewer, to speak in terms of the team and the school as a whole. This leads to the conclusion that these teachers do not succeed in talking and thinking about the school in this manner.

Next to these teachers are those who do know what is meant by this question and at what level the question is situated. They are fast to answer that in their school no goal-consensus is present and that

they regret this fact. With nostalgia some teachers think back to what they experienced in other schools or earlier in the same school. In other words, these teachers are conscious of what they miss. Consequently, some teachers identify themselves negatively with the school and some even consider to leave the school.

However, the lack of a common goal-orientation in these schools, does not prevent individual teachers from having a certain aim. In fact, characteristically of this group of schools is that the stress is on the work of the individual teacher in his/her classroom. A principal says : *"I could describe the school as a school in which the team works hard. If you put the question : 'In the classroom or in the school ?', then I have to say, in the first place : 'In the classroom'. And many teachers are satified with this. They do not ask anything more."* The school-level seems non-existent. These schools lack a perspective. There is no link between the daily activities and the achievement of future goals. Some teachers regret this. Others are satified to be an *"ordinary school"* and resign to this situation. No reflection with respect to a possible modification concerning the future is present in these schools.

The **team** in this type of school can be characterized as a **disengaged team** (3). We have to speak of a group of separate individuals rather than of a team. Almost no cooperation and exchange exists among the teachers. One is ill-informed about one another's work. Each teacher is mainly concerned with his/her own class. Neither personally, nor professionally these teachers receive support from one another, apart from a few exceptions. Even these exceptional cases are isolated communication and cooperation moments, taking place voluntarily. In general, a feeling of unity and community is absent. The existing formal structures are limited to a minimum and they function as hollow structures. A meeting is not a joint event, but is a moment during which announcements are made.

The reactions of the teachers are twofold. One group of teachers resign to this. Most of them have been teachers for a long time and they function almost automatically. Another group of teachers is highly conscious of the lack of mutual communication and discussion, and of the missed chances. Most of them have not been a teacher for very long and they think they could use their colleagues' help. The latter group of teachers, those regretting the lack of professional support, point to the fact that the principal fails to hand cornerstones for a professional collegiality. Daily communication is not structurally built-in. The existing structures do not offer guarantee for a systematic approach that would make visible the professional functioning. Willy-nilly, these teachers withdraw in their classrooms. As a result, they identify themselves as somebody working alone in a classroom. Teamwork hardly fits in their professional self-image.

The work climate in these schools is rather negative. In many schools the relations between the team members are obscured and crumbled.

As a result of conflicts several subcultures of people sharing the same opion arose. Typically, quite all these conflicts run out of hand because of small details. For some time, then, this controls the schoolfunctioning. This negative work climate heavily mortgages the job-satisfaction of the teachers.

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By way of conclusion, we could state that in the living-apart-together-school **a culture of mediocrity** is present. The basic assumption is : "Let's be but an ordinary school."

5 THE MEANING OF THE THREE CULTURE TYPES FOR EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

We start from the assumption that the introduction of an innovation can bring out a far-reaching change in the daily functioning of a school. On the one hand, an innovation can have an influence on the culture, but on the other hand, it is itself determined by the culture underlying this daily functioning. Due to the introduction of an innovation new patterns of thought and behavior are demanded. Consequently, the daily functioning partly loses its self-evidence.

Because an innovation has to start from certain norms and values in order to be successful, the question comes to the fore how big the discrepancy is between the culture of the innovation and the culture of the school. We will elaborate this for the three culture types.

5.1 Innovation in the family-school: possibilities, but also risks

The family-school is characterized by its informal culture. The stress is on the spontaneous, not planned aspects. The teachers feel a certain solidarity with the school and a strong willingness to engage themselves in the school. On the one hand, we expect this culture to offer chances for the innovation. On the other hand, however, we can predict that the lack of structures will cause implementation problems. The danger exists that working on the innovation will become dependent on the good-will of the teachers, and that the culture will offer little guarantee that the obtained results will last in one way or another.

With respect to the choice of the innovation-priorities, the involvement of the team is rather low and the priorities with regard to the content can be described as a minimal choice. Not all the teachers in these schools are involved with the innovation, and a common effort is out of the question. With regard to the concrete innovation-activities, diversity is found. In these schools a few innovation achievements can be found.

It is striking, however, that exactely those activities are institutionalized for which clear, rhytmical patterns exist. After some time those matters left to the free initiative of teachers fell back into the old, familiar patterns and structures.

With respect to the actual situation, we cannot speak of a common innovation dynamism. Either the dynamism came to a standstill and the innovation has become something to work on sporadically (for example the week before a visit of the external facilitator) or, the innovation activities are limited to a few individual teachers.

How can the innovation pattern be understood seen from the several culture variables ?

In the family-school the **principal** is characterized as a grandfather-figure. The contact with his teachers is informal and he considers them, in the first place, as friends. Formal contacts are reduced to a

minimum. His main concern consists in being a member of the group. Because this principal comes forward as an equal, he does not appear as a leader or stimulator with respect to the innovation. He prefers not to take action on the domain of the teachers. He considers the innovation as a matter of the teachers and does not offer any directed support. As such, the work on the innovation becomes dependent on the initiative and the good-will of the individual teachers.

The **goal-consensus** in the family-school only relates to a partial aspect of the schoolfunctioning. The goal-orientation is functional and is more a survival-reflex than an all-pervading basic-philosophy. The goal-orientation stands on its own and is not an integrated part of the schoolfunctioning. The goal-orientation does not function as a challenge for innovation. In other words, it does not offer a breeding ground for a school-specific translation of the innovation.

In the family-school the informal character of the **contacts between the team members** is stressed. Few structures exist. Communication and cooperation rarely refer to pedagogic-didactical aspects. The R.P.S. can not depart from structures. The place given to the R.P.S. depends on the individuals. Cooperation with respect to the innovation is very superficial.

In conclusion we can state that the culture in the family-school does offer chances for the innovation. Those teachers willing to take initiatives are not hindered. As such, in this way a number of innovative activities have been implemented. Still, the chance exists that by exclusively trusting on the good-will of the teachers the dynamism's broken up. Because few structures exist the innovation can depart from, little guarantee is given that the obtained results will last.

5.2 Innovation in the school as a professional organization : the culture as a catalyst

The culture of the school as a professional organization was characterized as a culture of competence and proficiency. We expect this culture comes close to the culture underlying the innovation. In the school as a professional organization we expect a high degree of implementation of R.P.S.-goals.

Concerning the of adoption decision, the vast majority of the teachers agreed to participate. The innovation was considered a challenge. With respect to the specific priorities chosen by the schools, the following is striking : the significance for the classroom-practice and for the functioning of the school as a whole are important criteria. It is striking that one often thinks in terms of what is good for the pupils. The choice of priorities is thus problem-oriented. Because of this, the guarantee for experiencing the meaningfulness is built in. We can say that in these schools the vast majority of the teachers is involved in the innovation. The innovation is clearly visible in the school. The frequency of innovation-activities is high, up to very high. This is also because innovation-work takes place within a structure or a strategy.

It is striking that to inform oneself theorically about the innovation, in a thorough manner, is considered as important as the translation to concrete activities. Not everything in these schools goes without a hitch. The way problems are treated is however typical. Whenever there are problems, they are brought up. One tries to locate them precisely. By setting up a study group or by calling on external facilitators, one tries to deal with it.

With regard to the institutionalization in these schools one makes sure that every teacher sufficiently masters the innovation activities before going to a next priority. Many teachers in these schools indicate that they experience their tasks as a teacher more dynamically now. The innovation has introduced a norm of continuous reflection. Also the consciousness of the team has increased. In what follows we try to explain how the culture of the schools as a professional organization deals with the innovation.

The **principal** of this schooltype is characterized as an architect. The relationship between the principal and the teachers is characterized by professional contacts. The principal considers his task as a pedagogical one. The staff characterizes him as a professional on the pedagogic-didactical domain, as someone who stands close to the classroom practices and who communicates clear expectations.

The optimizing focus is very much present for this architect-principal. From the very beginning of the innovation process, this type of principal has given clear signals to his teachers that he considers the innovation as an important task. By his words and actions this principal makes clear to his teachers he demands a lot of their professional functioning, but also that he is prepared to support them wherever they face problems. In the daily contacts with his teachers he has permanent sight on their functioning. The teachers respect their principal because they feel they are becoming better teachers. The principal manages to pass over his enthousiasm and dedication on his teachers. Relatively soon, a lot of changes in the classroom practice came about on the basis of a clear innovation strategy. An innovation-dynamism has grown : doing proposals for innovation, testing them on their usefulness and feasibility, testing new things in the classroom, evaluations, modifications ... always directed by the principal.

Due to this dynamism the motivation is tangibly ans visibly present in the school. The teachers notice changes in their classroom practice and in their pupils' results. They experience to have become a better teacher due to this innovation. Working on the innovation has become an integrated part of the professional culture.

The **goal-consensus** of this schooltype is characterized as a 'mission', an all penetrating basic-philosophy. One is used to think in terms of a future development for the school. Continual reflection is an important norm. Teachers experience a strong solidarity with their school and a willingness to invest in schoolactivities. Here the innovation has found a good breeding ground. Due to the basic-philosophy, actively alive in the school, the innovation is translated into specific innovation activities. The own goal-orientation prevails. One tries to integrate the innovation in the own school-project. On the one hand, the innovation finds a good breeding ground in the basic philosophy of the school. On the other hand, the R.P.S. provides goal-orientation. Because of the R.P.S. the available forces are united in order to work in the same way. The innovation is a permanent challenge for the basic-philosophy.

The historical consciousness present in working on the innovation, is typical of these schools. One is aware of the school's origin, of the consequences of the R.P.S. for the school and what the innovation has brought about. Meanwhile, future plans are made about what one would like to work on.

The **team** is characterized as a professional football-team. Numerous structurally built-in discussion and cooperation moments exist. They visualize the professional functioning. The norm is : "*Together we can*

achieve more than alone." This structural network offers the R.P.S. an optimal starting-point. The professional relationships function as a daily workplace for the innovation. In this way, the feeling arises that the R.P.S. is a common responsibility. A personal as well as a common 'ownership' arises. Personal initiative and creativity remain possible.

In summary, we can say that the culture in the school as a professional organization is highly compatible with the innovation-culture. The culture provides, so to speak, the anchorage ground for the innovation. The culture comes forward as catalyst of the innovation process, but is at the same time confirmed and consolidated by this innovation. Due to the way in which these schools work on innovation, the principal as well as the teachers gain positive experiences. This stimulates them to pursue the innovation. In other words, the culture facilitates the innovation.

5.3 Innovation in the living-apart-together school: the culture as an obstacle

The culture in the 'living-apart-together'-school is characterized as a culture of mediocrity. We expect a fairly serious gap between the values and norms introduced by the innovation and the present school culture. We, thus, expect a low degree of implementation in the 'living-apart-together'-school.

Concerning the adoption decision, most of the team members felt negative about the innovation. Characteristic of these schools was the fear to admit to the outside that they would join the R.P.S.. Thus, the innovation was even a negative factor for the identity of the school. In this way, one creates the assumption that not too many visible aspects should change if one wants the innovation to be accepted by parents for instance. Due to the fact that in these schools only a part of the teachers is involved in the innovation and due to the fact that those priorities are chosen that demand a minimal effort, the R.P.S. is not experienced as a real task.

A common innovation-dynamism is impossible in these schools because little or no concrete activities take place. The activities that do take place are usually isolated initiatives of individual teachers and are not based on a reflection.

The whole innovation period has had little or no consequences in these schools. One expresses disappointment about what the innovation has 'only' been. Due to the fact that the teachers notice little or no changes in their classroom practice, they do not experience any satisfaction of the work. Consequently, a mechanism of legitimation is created that maintains itself, namely 'the innovation is not something new, we did the same thing earlier on'.

Typically of these schools is that once in a while ideas are lounched, but not implemented. To the teachers it is often not clear which decisions are actually taken, and when something is considered completed. One does not at all experience to have become a better teacher due to the innovation, or that the innovation contributes to a further professionalization. In what follows we try to explain how the culture present in the 'living-apart-together'-school deals with the innovation.

The principal is characterized as a nonentity-principal. To a large extent, he is invisible inside the

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schoolfunctioning, and he distantiates himself from the classroom practice. He does not communicate a vision. The same holds true for the work on innovation. Also in relation to the R.P.S., this principal communicates few expectations. The teachers are not told that working on the innovation is something the principal considers important.

We also characterized the 'living-apart-together'-school by the lack of **goal-consensus**. One is not used to think in terms of the school's goal-orientation. The teachers invest, almost exclusively, in their own classroom activities. There is little involvement on the school as a whole. Starting with, and working on the innovation has not been a challenge to reflect together on the functioning of the school. Teachers are put off by the thought that certain matters should be dealt with differently. The norm mediocrity stands central. Also with regard to the work on innovation the rule counts : *"Let us be an ordinary school."* One does not really think about those aspects that might be dealt with differently. Because of this mechanism, the innovation challenges very little. Although this is the case for some teachers, it does not count for the school as a whole. The innovation did not bring about a process of reflection.

In this schooltype we characterized the **team** as a disengaged team, with little cooperation and exchange between the teachers. The norm is : *"Everyone works in his/her own classroom."* The relationships between the members of the team are discordant and the work climate is rather negative. In these schools, one does not dispose of channels that can serve as starting points to make the innovation visible and communicable. There is no place for innovation. Working on the R.P.S. is not a teamhappening. The innovation is, moreover, rather threatening with respect to the obtained security for teachers in their classroom.

By way of conclusion, we can say that the innovation in the 'living-apart-together'-school contrasts with the present culture. The method of working introduced by the innovation, is square to the present pattern of the teachers in the school. The innovation has little chance of success due to the lack of channels through which other values and norms can take shape.

6 DISCUSSION: INNOVATING AS A CULTURAL ENCOUNTER

The way in which various culture types have an impact on the innovation process and results can be made intelligible by way of the different culturemetaphors. These metaphors indicate that the norms and values that underly the internal functioning of schools, and that determine the thinking and working of the team members also determine what is possible in the school and what is unthinkable with respect to improvement. In the study, we found evidence for the following thesis by Rossman, Corbett and Firestone (1988, p. 126) : "The aversion to change varies with the character of the norms challenged and the newness of the challenge." In other words, the reaction of a school on innovation can partly be made understandable by referring to the local school culture, or more precisely by referring to the discrepancy between the norms and values that live in the school and norms and values underlying the innovation.

The question that presses forward is : "In how far is the present school culture compatible with the culture of the innovation ?" The R.P.S. assumes cooperation within the team and an openness to reflect

on the own classroom practice, and on the functioning of the school as a whole. This compatibility is strongest in the school as a professional organization. The assumptions are there, evidences that one can build-on with respect to innovation. In the 'living-apart-together'-school these basic conditions do not exist. The innovation introduces another pattern of norms and values that are square to the present patterns of teachers in the school. Moreover, channels are missing that can introduce new patterns of norms. The family-school stands in between. On the one hand, a certain receptivity for innovation exists; on the other hand, the starting-points are minimal because they depend on the good-will and the individual initiative of teachers.

We think, this finding should not be taken as a determinism, but rather as an indication of the importance of the school culture as a starting point for the internal and external support of innovation. To enhance the chances of success, implies to enhance the capacity for change in the present culture. The possible discrepancy between the school culture and the culture introduced by the innovation, should, in other words, constitute the starting-point for analysis and interventions. As such, we support the idea that the school culture is susceptible to change. We, as well, plead for a local (innovation)-policy in which the school is given a chance to develop an own identity.

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NOTES

(1) For an elaborate description, see also Staessens, 1990, p. 285-318. Belonging to the first and second culture type are each time two of the nine investigated schools. The third schooltype consists of four schools. One of the nine schools is not included in the comparison. This is mainly because of technical aspects of the research (absence of teachers dueing to illness, technical difficulties with the recording of interviews).

(2) Because we are dealing here with several 'types' of principals we opted to speak in terms of he/his. It is of course self-evident that as well female as male principals can be part of the several metaphors.

(3) The term 'disengaged team' is taken from family-therapy where one speaks of 'disengaged families'. See S. Minuchin (1967). Families of the Slums. An Exploration of Their Structure and Treatment. New York London : Basic Books, p. 216-229.

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